

## Mayor's Message

October 2010

By the time October arrives, we are especially busy working to complete infrastructure projects before the snow flies. Putting in new water lines or having a road sealed may be inconvenient for a while, but I hope you will look at the long term benefits and be patient with the process. When roads last longer and we know water will be adequate for your needs, I feel that we are doing our job to make life better. I would like to address two other issues that we have had inquiries about recently.

There have been concerns from multiple residents about what is required in park or planter strips, which is the area of a right-of-way typically located between the curb and sidewalk. City code indicates that landscaping is required in this area but our ordinance is vague and we are working to clarify requirements. Therefore, we are not pursuing enforcement on existing property owners who have replaced landscaping with concrete unless there are specific safety issues regarding barriers or objects located in the planter strip that are a health or safety issue.

However, we encourage you to work with the City staff if you consider any changes to the planter/park strip adjacent to your property. We desire to have some form of landscaping primarily to reduce costs related to maintaining utilities in park strips. Landscaping in these areas also reduces storm water runoff into the City systems and improves aesthetics in our community. Additionally, there are specific standards related to removal or trimming of trees in the right-of-way. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the City Community and Economic Development Department.

Residents also have questions about sidewalk repair. Sidewalks are generally paid for and installed by the property owner at the time of development. In rare cases, the City may install sidewalk the first time when a new road is constructed or as part of a road reconstruction to improve pedestrian access or resolve safety issues. Funds must first be appropriated by the City Council in this case.

Once the sidewalk is installed and dedicated to the City as part of the public right-of-way, the City assumes responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the sidewalk, except for snow removal. The City Council usually appropriates funds each year to repair sidewalk trip hazards. In some cases, the City may be able to grind out a minor trip hazard, usually between 1/2" and 2". A property owner may request that their sidewalk be repaired by contacting the City Public Services Department - Engineering office. A list is maintained and prioritized by the City Engineer annually. As funds are available, sidewalks are then repaired. The City attempts to group sidewalk repairs by location to maximize efficiency and cost savings.

If a property owner wants to repair the sidewalk on their own, the City will assist by removing and disposing of the concrete after the property owner takes on a permit from the Engineering

office. A \$10 permit fee pays for the cost of City inspection to make sure the sidewalk meets specifications. The property owner will then be responsible for paying for the cost of replacing the sidewalk using a contractor approved by the City.

Thank you for the good things you do to improve your homes and neighborhoods. Working together we can accomplish our goal of making life better in our City.